

Message Text

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20

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 OMB-01 A-01 PER-05

OPR-02 DRC-01 /113 W

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O 150905Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2611

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT AO

SUBJECT: TENSE MOOD SUDDENLY GRIPS LUANDA

1. WIDESPREAD FEAR SUDDENLY SURFACED IN LUANDA DURING MAY 14 AND CONTINUES ONLY SLIGHTLY DIMINISHED TODAY. IMMEDIATE CAUSE IS SPATE OF RUMORS ALLEGING WANTON KILLING OF "SEVERAL" SCHOOLCHILDREN ON NORTHEAST FRINGE OF CITY MORNING MAY 14. VERSION OF CIRCULATING AMONG WHITES (AND WHICH MOMENTARILY APPEARED TO HAVE CREATED NEAR PANIC AMONG AMERICAN EXPATRIATES CLUSTERED IN ALVALADE SECTION OF TOWN) IS THAT CHILDREN WERE KILLED BY RAMPAGING BLACKS; AMONG BLACKS (PARTICULARLY HOUSEHOLD SERVANTS, LOCAL EMPLOYEES, AND COMMON LABORERS) THAT KILLERS WERE WHITE REDNECKS LIVING IN NATIVE SECTIONS (5 PERCENT OF INHABITANTS OF MUCEQUES BELIEVED TO BE EUROPEAN) AND/OR MILITARY POLICE.

2. STARTING LATE AFTERNOON RADIO BEGAN BROADCASTING AT SHORT
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INTERVALS FIRM STATEMENT BY ARMED FORCES WARNING PEOPLE TO DIS-

REGARD UNPROVEN RUMORS BEING CIRCULATED BY PROFESSIONAL AGITATORS TO CAUSE INCIDENTS WHICH COULD ONLY MARR HISTORIC EVENTS: SWEAR-IN OF NEW PRESIDENT SPINOLA AND SUBSEQUENT NAMING OF NEW GOVERNMENT IN LISBON. SAME STATEMENT CONTINUES TODAY.

3. DURING EVENING SPOKESMAN FOR ARMED SERVICES HELD PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE SAID STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO TRACK DOWN SOURCE OF RUMORS HAD FAILED TO PRODUCE SHRED OF EVIDENCE. ACTIVITIST NEWSMAN FRIEND OF OUR SEPARATELY TOLD US MEDIA EFFORTS IN SAME DIRECTION PRODUCED SAME RESULTS: NO TRUTH TO STORIES OF CHILDREN BEING ASSASSINATED.

4. COMMENT: CURRENT HIGH TENSION MAY YET SPARK EXPLOSION, IN SPITE OF CONCERTED OFFICIAL EFFORTS TO RESTORE SENSE OF CALM. UP TO NOW CALM HAS BEEN SURFACE DEEP, WITH FEAR AMONG BLACKS IN PARTICULAR TENDING TO KEEP THINGS QUIET. WE NOTE IN PAST THREE OR FOUR DAYS SENSE OF FATALISM AMONG EDUCATED WHITE SECTOR, HOWEVER, THAT IT ONLY MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HEAVILY ARMED EUROPEAN REDNECKS GO ON RAMPAGE AGAINST BLACKS. THIS UNDOUBTEDLY FANNED BY REPORTS OF RACIAL CLASHES IN BEIRA OVER WEEKEND BUT CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED AS ALARMISM GIVEN REACTION OF SAME ELEMENTS HERE TO EVENTS OF MARCH 1961. (REVIEW OF LUANDA REPORTING OF THAT TIME IS DISQUIETING.)

5. IT SEEMS OBVIOUS CURRENT RUMORS ARE WORK OF SKILLED PROVOCATEURS. QUESTION IS WHETHER THEY ARE OF EXTREME RIGHT (POSSIBLY EX-DGS TYPES) OR MPLA. THERE WAS A SUB-RUMOR YESTERDAY THAT RADIO BRAZZAVILLE WAS EXHORTING BLACKS TO RISE. WE CANNOT CONFIRM: BROADCASTS WE MONITORED WERE USUAL THIRD-RATE MARXIST RUBBISH, PRESUMABLY TAPED BEFORE APRIL 25.

6. WHAT LUANDA NOW NEEDS IS FOR AUTHORITIES TO PINPOINT SOURCE OF RUMORS. WITH DGS HOBbled THIS PROBABLY WILL NOT HAPPEN. MILITARY WILL THUS HAVE TO ENSURE PEACE, WITH TIME THE ONLY HEALER IF TROUBLE CAN BE AVOIDED.

7. WE ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO REASSURE AMERICAN COMMUNITY WHICH IN ANY EVENT WOULD NOT SEEM TO BE IN LINE OF POTENTIAL FIRE.
BRIGGS

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